

ARTIST FEATURE

## Participant trades pizza dough for a paintbrush



BY SHARYN KOPF  
EXAMINER STAFF WRITER

**A**rt, they say, is subjective. For some, it incorporates pianos and paint, words or music or choreography. For Brittany Saxton, though, artistry is found in the well-crafted relationship of crust, sauce, cheese and toppings that make a perfect pizza. Her skills in that arena have made her a five-time world pizza champion.

**But visual art? Not so much.**

Still, when she was asked to participate in the 2025 Not So Bad Art by Good People fundraiser, she stepped away from the ovens at her Bellefontaine restaurant, Six Hundred Downtown, long enough to try her hand at a different kind of art. "I am not artistic, but I think it's a cool program," Saxton said.

"I'm excited to be able to give back to the art league this way."

Saxton owes her participation to local entrepreneur Jason Duff, who recommended her to the Logan County Art League. Duff also nominated Doug Carlton for the 2024 contest and watching Carlton create his art a year ago

See TRADES on P8



Brittany Saxton displays her art submission for the 2025 Not So Bad Art by Good People fundraiser. Brittany tried her hand at putting paint on canvas for her entry into the contest. Her submission is on display at Citizens Federal Savings & Loan, where people can vote for their favorite artwork through Friday, Jan. 31. (EXAMINER PHOTO | SHARYN KOPF)

## L.A. WILDFIRES Strong winds forecast to return and threaten fight against fires



A firefighter sets up a hose while fighting the Palisades Fire in Mandeville Canyon on Saturday, Jan. 11, 2025, in Los Angeles. (AP PHOTO/ERIC THAYER)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Additional water tankers and scores of firefighters arrived at the Los Angeles area on Monday ahead of fierce winds that were forecast to return and threaten the progress made so far on two massive infernos that have destroyed thousands of homes and killed at least 24 people.

Planes doused homes and hillsides with bright pink fire-retardant chemicals, while crews and fire engines were being placed near particularly vulnerable spots with dry brush. Dozens of water trucks rolled in to replenish supplies after hydrants ran dry last week when the two largest fires erupted.

Tabitha Trosen and her boyfriend said she feels like they are "teetering" on the edge with the constant fear that their neighborhood could be the next under threat.

"Our cats are ready to go, we have their carriers by the door prepped with their little stuffed animals and things like that," Trosen said, adding that she keeps adding things as she thinks about what she could lose. "It's like, how do I take care of myself, and what are the things that will ground me as a human and remind me of my background and my life and my family."

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass and other officials — who have faced criticism over their initial response to fires that began last week — expressed confidence Monday that the region was ready to face the new threat with additional firefighters brought in from around the U.S., as well as Canada and Mexico.

"We're absolutely better prepared," LA County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone said when asked what will be different from a week ago, when hurricane-force winds propelled multiple fires across the parched, brush-filled region that hasn't seen rain in more than eight months.

The winds also are not expected to reach hurricane-force like last week, though they could still ground fire-fighting aircraft, Marrone said, warning if winds reach 70 mph (112 kph), "it's going to be very difficult to contain that fire."

Fire officials advised residents in high-risk areas to just leave home — and not wait for formal evacuation orders — if they sense danger.

That's exactly what Tim Kang of La Crescenta did last Wednesday. Feeling sick from the smoky air and fearful of nearby fires spreading, Kang and his brothers packed up and have stayed away from their neighborhood.

*A dad and daughter help evacuees learn whether their homes survived the California wildfires*

BY GENE JOHNSON  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

A father-daughter team in the Los Angeles area are staying in their home behind the fire barricades and taking inventory of destroyed properties. Vanessa Prata and her parents packed up to leave their home in Altadena, but decided to stay. On Friday, they posted to an Altadena community group on Facebook to say they were willing to take the addresses of people who had evacuated their homes and check on their property. Vanessa and her father, Aluizio Prata, visited more than two dozen homes Friday and Saturday. Fewer than half are still standing.

## 'PDS' warnings were made to grab attention in tornadoes, hurricanes, and now wildfires



A "Particularly Dangerous Situation" red flag warning appears on the National Weather Service's website for Los Angeles, Monday, Jan. 13, 2025. (AP PHOTO/RACHEL LEATHE)

BY JEFF MARTIN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The National Weather Service's Los Angeles page screams "Particularly Dangerous Situation (PDS)" in hot pink letters against a gray background.

It's a rare warning aimed at seizing attention ahead of extreme wildfire risk that's predicted to start in Southern California at 4 a.m. (1200GMT) Tuesday.

PDS warnings were first used to warn of tornado outbreaks in the Midwest. More than a decade ago, three meteorologists proposed

expanding their use to disasters such as ice storms, floods, hurricanes, and now wildfires.

**Grabbing attention**  
"It catches the attention, it really heightens that awareness and the need to really act at that point," said one of those scientists, Jonathan Howell.

The hope was that the phrase would "become synonymous with extreme weather events" and also could be used for emergencies such as hurricanes and snowstorms, Howell and two colleagues wrote for a presentation at a 2011 conference of the American Meteorological Society.

"I definitely think this has made an impact and saved lives over the years," said Howell.

**Past warnings**  
The weather service's Storm Prediction Center — whose mission is to provide "forecasts and watches for severe thunderstorms and tornadoes" — says that the term was first used April 2, 1982 by forecaster Robert H. Johns, in conjunction with a tornado watch.

That came after a "failed attempt in the late 1970s," Johns said in an interview in the Electronic Journal of Severe Storms Meteorology. Meteorologists had alerted the public to a "big next day," only to see no severe weather, he said.

Today, meteorologists have better tools to predict catastrophic weather than they had in the 1970s and 1980s and forecasters can more reliably issue severe warnings, Howell said.

The PDS term appeared in newspaper articles such as an April 1, 1983 Associated Press story about a widespread storm system that caused a blinding dust storm in West Texas.

**PDS warnings for wildfires**  
During the first week of November, as Santa Ana winds fueled the Mountain Fire northwest of Los Angeles, the National Weather Service issued a PDS warning. Forecasters called the threat "extreme and life-threatening."

Then, on Dec. 9, residents of Los Angeles and Ventura counties were again warned of a "particularly dangerous situation" as Santa Ana winds roared through the mountains.

# Biden says he's leaving Trump with a 'strong hand to play' in world conflicts

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden said Monday that his stewardship of American foreign policy has left the U.S. safer and economically more secure, arguing that President-elect Donald Trump will inherit a nation viewed as stronger and more reliable than it was four years ago.

Biden trumpeted his administration's work on expanding NATO, rallying allies to fight Ukraine with military aid to fight Russia and bolstering American chip manufacturing to better compete with China during a wide-ranging speech to reflect on his foreign policy legacy a week before ceding the White House to Trump.

Biden's case for his achievements will be shadowed and shaped, at least in the near term, by the messy counterfactual that American voters once again turned to Trump and his protectionist worldview. And he will leave office at a turbulent moment for the globe, with a series of conflicts raging.

"Thanks to our administration, the United States is winning the worldwide competition compared to four years ago," Biden said in his address at the State Department. "America is stronger. Our alliances are stronger. Our adversaries and competitors are weaker. We have not gone to war to make these things happen."

The one-term Democrat took office in the throes of the worst global pandemic in a century, and his plans to repair alliances strained by four years of Trump's "America First" worldview were quickly stress-tested by international crises: the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and Hamas' brutal 2023 attack on Israel that triggered the war in the Middle East.

Biden argued that he provided a steady hand when the world needed it most. He was tested by war, calamity and miscalculation.

"My administration is leaving the next administration with a very strong

hand to play," Biden said. "America is once again leading."

Chaotic US exit from Afghanistan was an early setback for Biden

With the U.S. completing its 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan, Biden fulfilled a campaign promise to wind down America's longest war.

But the 20-year conflict ended in disquieting fashion: The U.S.-backed Afghan government collapsed, a grisly bombing killed 13 U.S. troops and 170 others, and thousands of desperate Afghans descended on Kabul's airport in search of a way out before the final U.S. aircraft departed over the Hindu Kush.

# Examiner NEWS

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**ABE MARTIN**



"Ever notice how lovely a couple gits along when they're both homely?"

Written prior, 1931, by Kin Hubbard, a world-famous newspaper humorist and father of late T.E. Hubbard, former Examiner owner/publisher

## ■ BELLEFONTAINE BEAT

### POLICE & FIRE

#### Restaurant patron skips out on bar tab leads to OVI citation

Cody Black, 35, of Kentucky, was charged with operating a vehicle under the influence Friday, Jan. 10, following a traffic stop conducted by officers of the Bellefontaine Police Department.

Officers were dispatched to Iron City Sports Bar around 11 p.m. in response to a report of a possible theft. Restaurant staff reported that Black had two drinks and left without paying his tab. Witnesses described the suspect as a white male in his mid-30s, wearing a grey hat, a neon green shirt, and dark jeans, driving a dark grey Ford F-150 northbound on Main Street.

Police located a vehicle matching the description near Main Street and Sandusky Avenue and followed it as it continued north. The truck eventually pulled into the Waffle House parking lot, where officers initiated a traffic stop.

Black admitted to being at Iron City and drinking two tall Miller Lite beers. He explained that he left the bar without paying due to his truck becoming stuck in snow and requiring assistance to move. Black agreed to a series of field sobriety tests, which were conducted both outdoors and in a more controlled environment inside Burger King.

During the tests, officers observed multiple signs of impairment, including difficulty following instructions and maintaining balance. Black denied using drugs, and no weapons or illegal substances were found during a search of his vehicle.

At the Bellefontaine Police Department, Black agreed to submit to a chemical breath test. His results measured below the legal limit for intoxication, with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.070 and 0.069 in two samples.

Although initially slated for transport to the Logan County Jail, Black was released after arranging for a ride to pick him up. He was issued a citation for operating a vehicle under the influence.

The restaurant declined to pursue charges for the unpaid drinks.

#### Suspect arrested following brief foot pursuit

Gregory Wilson, 29, of Bellefontaine, was arrested for obstructing official business and multiple warrants for failure to appear following a Sunday, Jan. 12, investigation by officers of the Bellefontaine Police Department.

At approximately 1:13 a.m., officers were dispatched to the area of 120 west High Avenue in response to a complaint about a vehicle disturbance. The complainant reported a dark-colored truck revving its engine and performing burnouts. The vehicle was identified as belonging to Wilson, who reportedly parked it behind a residence on north Detroit Street before entering the home.

Upon arrival, officers observed an individual matching Wilson's description walking southbound near north Detroit Street. Officers approached and Wilson reportedly fled on foot, prompting a pursuit. Officers, with assistance from the Logan County Sheriff's Office, worked to contain the area while K-9 Officer Pyro was called to assist.

Wilson was eventually located hiding under a deck at 125 west Brown Avenue. Despite repeated commands to show his hands, Wilson was initially uncooperative. Officers gained better visibility when deputies pulled up their cruisers to light up the deck. Wilson was told the K-9 officer would be deployed and he would be bit, and Wilson ultimately complied. He was taken into custody without further incident and searched, with no contraband found aside from a pocketknife.

During processing at the Logan County Jail, a body scan revealed a potential abnormality. Wilson was transported to Mary Rutan Hospital for further examination, where medical staff determined there were no issues. He was then returned to the jail and lodged.

## ■ LOGAN COUNTY BEAT

### SHERIFF & HIGHWAY PATROL

#### Large amount of marijuana, cash recovered

Drugs and over \$1,000 in cash were recovered by Logan County Sheriff's Office deputies during a traffic stop early Friday, Jan. 10, along U.S. Route 33, just east of Russells Point.

Miles Harte, 21, of East Liberty, was stopped for speeding shortly after 1 a.m., when a deputy observed his gray Honda Civic traveling eastbound at 71 mph in a 55-mph zone.

After stopping the vehicle, deputies identified the driver, Harte. A strong odor of marijuana was detected from the vehicle.

Harte, who claimed to be returning home to East Liberty after visiting a friend at Indian Lake, was found to possess THC pre-rolled cigarettes, a vape, and a lighter during a pat-down search. He initially denied having additional

substances in the vehicle but later admitted there was marijuana inside.

A search of the vehicle revealed a large stash of THC products, raw marijuana, and psilocybin mushroom chocolate bars. Deputies discovered over 600 grams of marijuana in labeled baggies, THC cartridges, edibles, and paraphernalia, along with \$1,140 in cash.

He claimed the items were all intended for personal use and had been purchased in Michigan.

The vehicle's contents included 638.43 grams of raw marijuana, various THC cartridges, gummies and concentrates and psilocybin chocolate bars, a Schedule 1 controlled substance

Harte was detained and transported to the Logan County Jail. He was charged with possession of a controlled substance. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

## ■ LOCAL NOTES

### Logan Soil & Water Conservation District board to meets

The Logan Soil & Water Conservation District Board meets at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the SWCD office, 324 County Road 11, Bellefontaine.



### Mayor's Association meets Wednesday

The Logan County Mayor's Association meets at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, in the second floor of the City of Bellefontaine, second floor council chambers, 135 N. Detroit St.



### Rushsylvania Lions host breakfast Jan. 18

The Rushsylvania Lions Club hosts a Pancake and Sausage Breakfast fundraiser on Saturday, Jan. 18, from 8 a.m. until sold out at the Lions Meeting Room, 113 N. Sandusky St. in Rushsylvania across from the post office.



Breakfast will include pancakes, locally-raised whole hog sausage, orange juice, coffee or milk. Carry out is available. Proceeds support local Lions Club community service projects.

### LCS Board's annual meeting set for Jan. 20

The annual meeting of Lutheran Community Services is 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 20, at Our Daily Bread, 820 W. Sandusky Ave. All are welcome.

### Community Recovery Team meets Jan. 21

Logan County Community Recovery Team meets at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 21, at Logan County Job and Family Services, 1 Hunter Place, Bellefontaine.

## PIRATE SNOWBALL ROYALTY



Riverside Schools has announced its snowball court representatives for festivities that begin Friday, Jan. 31, with a pep rally and reverse court at the end of the school day. The court will be formally announced that evening between the junior varsity and varsity basketball games. Seated are the 2025 snowball king and queen Damien Smith and Aubree Huston; and standing around them are freshman representatives Molly Carman and Gunner Carpenter; sophomore representatives Emilee Robinson and Cooper Crouch; junior representatives Rae Sagraves and Dallas Young; and senior representatives Kirstyn Carpenter and Ryder Arnett. Noah Holt will be walking with the king as the snowball prince, while twin sisters Sawyer and Stella Manahan will be walking with the queen as the snowball princesses. High school students will come together Saturday night, Feb. 1, from 8 to 10 p.m. for the Snowball Dance, with the 2025 theme of Neon. (RIVERSIDE PHOTO)

## BMS shines at Model United Nations Conference



Pictured, from the left, are Bellefontaine Middle School students competing at the Model United Nations competition, Isaac Roberts, Isaac Merrin, Leo Reser-Stanford, Holland Hower and Erys Predmore. (BCS PHOTO)

BY THE EXAMINER STAFF

Five Bellefontaine Middle School students recently showcased their global knowledge at the Cleveland council World of Affairs Model United Nations competition.

BMS Model United Nations team members Isaac Roberts, Holland Hower, Erys Predmore, Leo Reser-Stanford and Isaac Merrin traveled to the contest at John Carroll

University.

This group of students acted as UN delegates for three different countries: France, Mexico and Syria.

The students wrote and debated position papers regarding specific topics to come up with joint resolutions mimicking what would occur at the World United Nations level.

The BMS Model United Nations team is coached by Stephanie Fissel and Sandi Chervenak.

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## Tigers' McGill to retire as coach

BY MIKE FRANK  
EXAMINER SPORTS WRITER

Coach Dan McGill is retiring as the head coach of West Liberty-Salem football.

The news was announced in a release from WL-S athletic director Morgan Sullivan on Monday.

McGill has coached the Tigers since 2013, with an overall record of 97-41. The most recent campaign saw West Liberty-Salem finish 5-0 to win the North Division in the Ohio Heritage Conference. Overall, they went 9-1 in the regular season.

In the playoffs, they defeated Arcanum, Miami East, Waynesville and rival Indian Lake to reach the state semifinals for the first time. They lost to Ironton, who went on to win the Division V title.

West Liberty-Salem reached the postseason nine times under McGill, going 13-9. They reached the regional finals in 2013, 2014 and 2019.

McGill spent one year as an assistant at Bellefontaine in 1999. He then switched to the staff at West Liberty-Salem, serving as an assistant from 2000 to 2008.

From 2008 to 2012, McGill shifted his focus to youth football, shaping the next generation of Tigers.

"His journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, marked by unwavering commitment, exceptional leadership, and an enduring impact on players, colleagues, and the West Liberty-Salem community," the release stated.

"He built a program defined by hard work, integrity, and a relentless belief in the potential of every player. His athletes not only became better football players but also learned life lessons that will guide them far beyond the gridiron," it said.

In a phone interview Monday,



McGILL

McGill said that he was very thankful to all of the coaches that he had the opportunity to coach with both as an assistant under Toby Smith and on his current staff.

"I also really appreciate all the players at the end of the day," McGill said. "I actually enjoy practice, because it's time to be around those guys and see them improve on a day-to-day basis."

He added that the key to success is having a program which develops players. "A lot of my most successful years were with senior classes who were program kids and worked really hard in the weight room and in the offseason."

McGill also expressed appreciation to his wife and family for their support. "I also have gratitude toward the Lord. He has put me in a place to have impact for good."

"Coach McGill exemplifies what it means to lead with heart and purpose," said Sullivan. "His dedication to our students, school, and community is unparalleled, and his legacy will resonate for years to come. Thank you, Coach McGill, for the memories, the lessons, and the legacy. WL-S football is forever stronger because of you."

## West Liberty-Salem cruises past Lady Jets

By The Examiner Staff  
West Liberty-Salem rolled to a victory Monday, topping Northeastern 68-7 in Ohio Heritage Conference girls basketball at home.

The Lady Tigers improve to 5-3 in the OHC and 8-4 overall. Northeastern remains winless on the year, falling to 0-16 and 0-12 in the league.

Arianna Weaver led WL-S with 14 points. Also in double figures are Addi Wallen with 13 points and Maddie McGill with 11.

The Lady Jets got a three-pointer by Chloe Waugh, a basket by Danielle Phelan and one free throw each by Allie Peterson and Alison Shaner.

West Liberty-Salem took a 15-3 lead in the first quarter, allowing only the score by Waugh for Northeastern. Weaver had seven points and Wallen hit two shots and a free throw for five.

Northeastern got its lone point of the second on a free throw by Peterson in the early going. WL-S hit from inside and outside, racking up 28 points in the period. Weaver and Ava Johnson each had a three-pointer, with two by Wallen. Lucy Cole, Ava Poppe, Belle Sarver and McGill all con-



Maddie McGill of West Liberty-Salem scores during the second half of Monday's game against Northeastern. (EXAMINER PHOTO | MIKE FRANK)

tributed baskets as the Tigers were able to keep rotating in players off the bench.

The second half was played with a running clock. WL-S scored nine in the third and 16 in the fourth. For Northeastern, Phelan made a basket in the third and Shaner

connected on a free throw late.

WL-S also won the JV contest, 29-4. Cole had 10 points and Grace Jones six points.

West Liberty-Salem will next host West Jefferson on Saturday.

See **ROUNDUP** on Page 5



Coach Ryan Day, quarterback Will Howard and defensive end Jack Sawyer of Ohio State celebrate after defeating Texas in the Cotton Bowl to advance to the College Football Playoff title game. They will face Notre Dame next Monday. (AP PHOTO).

## Buckeyes, Irish enter uncharted waters with 16th game of season

BY TIM REYNOLDS  
AP SPORTS WRITER

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — The year was 1894. Yale put together a football schedule that was daunting: Games on Wednesdays and Saturdays, basically every week from late September to late November, 16 contests in all.

No major college football team — what we now call the FBS level — had a 16-game season since.

Until now.

Welcome to yet another new part of this rapidly changing college football world. Seasons, at least for some teams, will be longer than ever. Texas and Penn State just played their 16th and final games of this 2024 season. And on Jan. 20 in the College Football Playoff championship game, Notre Dame and Ohio State will be playing their 16th and final games of this season in a matchup to decide the national title.

"How we got ready for the season, how we're adapting, is you have a plan, you have a team, you

have a sports performance team that you listen to, and you talk through some different scenarios and you've got to be adaptable," Notre Dame coach Marcus Freeman said. "You've got to be willing to adapt based off the unpredictable things that can happen, and that's what we've been able to do — and I feel like our guys will be physically ready to roll."

The 16-game season didn't come out of nowhere.

Expanding the CFP to 12 teams meant that the teams in the national championship game would have to play either three or four games — depending on whether they got a first-round bye or not. With a 12-game regular season and then a conference championship game for some schools, it's almost certain that the national finalists in this system will have to play at least 16 games along the way.

Notre Dame and Ohio State each played 13-game seasons last year. Playing 16-game seasons this year could obviously be considered

problematic — it's a lot more wear and tear on bodies — but it's also a wonderful problem to have, since it comes with a chance at a national championship.

"Along the way, we looked at a lot of different things and metrics about playing this many games, playing our 16th game, what that was going to be like," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. "We knew it was going to be a little bit of a battle of attrition at times. So, depth was certainly a critical part of roster management and talent acquisition, but also how we practice, how we play. We've taken all those things into consideration so that we're still really, really fresh going into the end of the season."

Only three teams at the "major college" level played the 16-game season before this year: Yale in 1894, Penn in 1892 and Yale in 1889. It has happened a handful of times at the FCS and Division II levels as well.

See **SEASON** on Page 5

## Chieftains collect win over Celina

BY MIKE FRANK  
EXAMINER SPORTS WRITER

Bellefontaine is proving adept at being able to adapt.

The Chieftains powered past Celina 53-38 in nonleague boys basketball play on Saturday night. They are now 6-5 on the season.

It was a different feel from their high-scoring double-OT win over Kenton Ridge earlier in the week, but they handled it smoothly.

Bellefontaine established an early four-point lead, then used its quickness in the second to stretch that to double digits. Celina made a run in the third, but only ever got within seven points.

Junior Grayson Lotts had 13 points for Bellefontaine, with Jair Mundy having 12 and Patrick Stolly getting 10.

"I thought it all started with our defense," said Chieftains coach Henry Stolly. "We've really been stressing defense. I thought our kids really locked in to the game plan and did a nice job of executing on that end. That usually leads to good offense and that's what I saw tonight early on."

He added, "We got some great passes by our point guard Braylon (Newcomb). He looks up the court so well, and our kids know that you just run the floor and you're going to get a good look. It was all set up by the unselfishness of our point guard."

Newcomb had eight assists, while Salyer pulled down 10 rebounds.

For Celina (3-9), Gavin Wicker did the bulk of the work with 21 points. Kaiden Wertz scored 12.

After Celina got the game's first points, Bellefontaine answered with a scoop shot by Jacob Salyer, then scores

by Mundy and Newcomb. A couple of baskets by Wertz tied it.

A three-pointer by Jamison Clement and a free throw by C.J. Butler put the Chiefs back ahead as the period wound down.

In the closing seconds, a Celina player dove after a loose ball and knocked over a water cooler at the end of the Bulldogs' bench. The resulting spill delayed things while it was all mopped up.

In the second quarter, Bellefontaine had a 12-8 lead after the first couple of minutes. Mundy then hit a jumper and had a couple of fast-break scores about a minute apart, boosting the gap to 10 points and leading to a Celina timeout.

Wicker made Celina's only field goal of the period with three minutes to go on a shot along the baseline.

Mundy and Butler each scored, the latter off a long pass for a 22-10 Bellefontaine advantage at the break.

Salyer opened the third period with a shot from long range. Celina then got a 8-0 run by Wicker and Wertz bringing the Bulldogs to within single digits at 25-18.

After a Chieftain timeout with four minutes left, Butler went to the line and made the first of two free throws. He missed the second, but the Chiefs got control, kicked it out to Newcomb, who hit from 3-point land.

Scoring by Newcomb and Solly eventually stretched the lead to 33-20. Three Bulldogs scores cut that back down going into the fourth.

Lotts had a pair of free throws, and after a Celina score, drained two straight 3-pointers.

See **HOOPS** on Page 5



# entertainment

## Beyoncé donates \$2.5 million to fire relief and Meghan delays show launch due to the disaster

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Weaker winds and intense firefighting efforts over the weekend boosted containment of fires burning in and around Los Angeles, but the effects of the blazes on the entertainment world continue.

The Oscar nominations have been delayed and the film academy announced Monday that it would cancel a gathering of nominees due to the fire. It's the latest shift to Hollywood's awards season and other projects are also being delayed. Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, announced Sunday she would not launch a Netflix lifestyles program as planned this week and would wait until March.

Celebrities and entertainment organizations are pledging millions to help those who have been displaced or lost their homes, with Beyoncé directly millions to help families in the Eaton fire area.

While firefighters over the weekend were able to push the flames away from several populated areas, strong winds are expected to resume this week and last through

Wednesday.

Thousands of homes have been destroyed, and 24 people have died as a result of the fires. More are reported missing and officials expect that number to increase.

Here's more on how the fires are affecting celebrities and the entertainment world.

Beyoncé, Netflix, Comcast donates millions to help wildfire victims

Beyoncé has contributed \$2.5 million to a newly launched LA Fire Relief Fund created by her charitable foundation, BeyGOOD.

The announcement arrived via the BeyGOOD foundation Instagram account on Sunday. "The fund is earmarked to aid families in the Altadena/Pasadena area who lost their homes, and to churches and community centers to address the immediate needs of those affected by the wildfires," the caption read.

Founded in 2013, the BeyGOOD foundation concentrates on economic equity, by "supporting marginalized and under-resourced pro-

grams," according to its mission statement.

Last week, Beyoncé's mother Tina Knowles shared that her Malibu bungalow was destroyed in the Los Angeles-area fires. "It was my favorite place, my sanctuary, my sacred happy place. Now it is gone," she wrote on Instagram. "God Bless all the brave men and women in our fire department who risked their lives in dangerous conditions."

Netflix and Comcast NBCUniversal on Monday pledged \$10 million each to organizations offering aid to victims of the LA-area wildfires.

Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said its donation will be split among five recipients including World Central Kitchen and the Los Angeles Fire Department Foundation. Comcast Corporation Chairman and CEO Brian L. Roberts allocated \$2.5 million of its \$10 million cash commitment to Habitat for Humanity of Greater Los Angeles' ReBUILD LA initiative. The remainder of the money would

go to other charitable foundations helping victims.

The Screen Actors Guild announced over the weekend it would commit \$1 million to help members affected by the fires. While a lot of attention has been paid to stars who have lost homes, numerous less-famous industry workers have also lost homes or been displaced by the fires.

The nonprofit fundraising group Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS has awarded \$500,000 in emergency grants to help Los Angeles-area residents and first responders with meals, shelter, medical care, clothing and emergency financial assistance.

"These wildfires have left deep scars, but they've also ignited a powerful wave of support from Broadway to the West Coast," said Robert E. Wankel, Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS Board of Trustees president and chairman and CEO of The Shubert Organization.

Meghan delays launch of Netflix series

The Duchess of Sussex has pushed back the release of her new Netflix series due to the wildfires that have ravaged the LA-area.

"With Love, Meghan" was set to debut Wednesday, but the streaming service said Sunday that it supports her request to push the premiere to focus on helping those affected by the fires.

The Duchess was born and raised in Los Angeles and now lives in Montecito, California, with Harry, the Duke of Sussex and their two children.

On Saturday, the royal couple visited Pasadena to hand out food and water to fire victims and thank first responders.

"With Love, Meghan" is a lifestyle program featuring the Duchess chatting with celebrity pals and demonstrating tasks like floral arrangements and baking. "I've always loved taking something pretty ordinary and elevating it," Meghan says in the trailer. The show will now drop March 4.

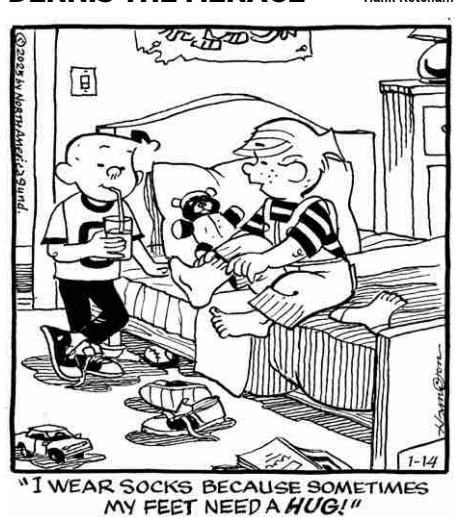
Composer Arnold Schoenberg's original work lost in fires

# comics

**MODERATELY CONFUSED** Jeff Stahl



**DENNIS THE MENACE** Hank Ketcham



**REALITY CHECK** Dave Whamond



**RUBES** Leigh Rubin



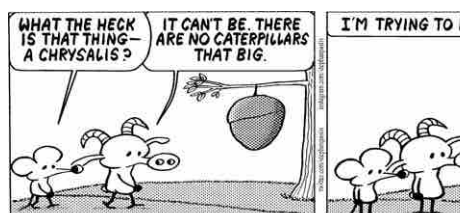
**PEANUTS** Charles Schulz



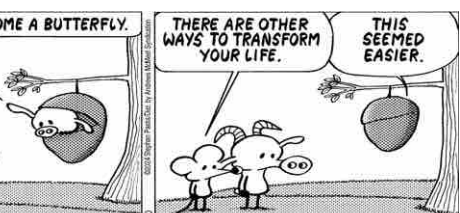
**PEARLS BEFORE SWINE** Stephan Pastis



**NON-SEQUITUR** Wiley Sequitur



**SUDOKU** KING FEATURES



## CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

- Spruced up
- Comedian Margaret
- Arduous journey
- Taj Mahal city
- Unprocessed
- Conceal
- Buffets with Mexican food
- Rocker — Pop
- Yoko from Tokyo
- Astern
- Unravels
- Blaster's need
- Tease
- Neighbor of Chad
- Wilma and Fred's kid
- Piglet's pop
- Author Fleming
- Ethereal
- Rabbi's religion
- Fall bloom
- Buddy
- Canonized Fr. woman

**DOWN**

- Post-WWII alliance
- "The Candy House" author Jennifer
- Not pizzicato
- Eastern "way"
- Make by hand
- Male red deer
- Pained sounds
- Baseball diamond stop
- Latvia's capital
- Jittery
- Lock opens
- "Troy" actor Eric
- Little lie
- "America's Next Top Model" host
- "Community" actor Jeong
- JFK's veep
- Chit
- Abysmal
- Shriver of tennis
- Tipsy
- Before
- Aleppo's land (Abbr.)
- Equi-
- 1040 org.
- On
- "The Lion King" lion
- TV explorer
- Author Turgenev
- Air outlet
- Scarce
- Nile wader
- Proscribes
- Island in a computer game
- Spigot
- Nile biter

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

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**Saturday's answer 1-13**

**HOROSCOPES** ROYAL STARS | FROM KING FEATURES SYNDICATE By Georgia Nicols

**MOON ALERT:** After 4:30 a.m. EST today (1:30 a.m. PST), there are no restrictions to shopping or important decisions today. The Moon is in Leo.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** for Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025:  
 You are determined and principled, and also self-indulgent. You appreciate art and music. You have a quirky sense of humor. This is a year of service, probably service to family. Therefore, take care of yourself so that you can be a resource to others. Might this be time for a makeover?

**THE STARS SHOW THE KIND OF DAY YOU'LL HAVE:** 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

**ARIES (March 21-April 19)**  
 ★★☆☆ This is a lovely day to socialize! Get out and interact with others. Meet friends for coffee, happy hour, lunch, dinner or casual get-togethers. Sports events and fun activities with kids will please you! Anything to do with the entertainment world and the hospitality industry will get a lift!  
 Tonight: Socialize.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20)**  
 ★★☆☆ Today you can enjoy domestic peace and happiness and feel happy to be in your home. However, this is also a good day to invite others to your home and your excellent table, because you are an admired host who provides good food and drink to your guests.  
 Tonight: Cocoon.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20)**  
 ★★☆☆ This is an upbeat, happy day for you! Get out and interact with others. You'll enjoy short trips, talking to neighbors, siblings and relatives, as well as running errands and dealing with appointments. It's also a great day to learn something new, because you're enthusiastic and keen. Tonight:

**DISCUSSIONS.**  
**CANCER (June 21-July 22)**  
 ★★☆☆ Financial negotiations will go well today. In fact, this is an excellent day to discuss business. Trust your moneymaking ideas. You might see ways to boost your income. Travel or foreign interests could be involved.  
 Tonight: Check your belongings.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)**  
 ★★☆☆ This is a lovely day, because the Moon is in your sign dancing with lucky Jupiter. It's a great day to get together with old friends. You also might be concerned for the welfare of someone. Group activities in particular are favored. You'll be persuasive in sales, public relations and marketing.  
 Tonight: You win!

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)**  
 ★★☆☆ Today you have a warm feeling in your tummy; you're relaxed and content with your world. Relations with partners and close friends are warm and congenial. Meanwhile, you're up for some fun socializing, even though you are keen to see each other today. They'll be enthusiastic to share ideas and pool their efforts to get something done. In particular, working together for the benefit of others will appeal to you. Tonight: Be friendly.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)**  
 ★★☆☆ People notice you today, and it's a good thing, because you look upbeat and happy. You might even use your high-viz influence to rally your troops to work for a good cause. People are idealistic and generous today, which is why many are willing to lend a helping hand. Admirable! Tonight: You're admired.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)**  
 ★★☆☆ Do something different; you want some adventure today. Shake things up a little. If possible, travel or take a short trip. If not, go somewhere you've never been before so that you feel stimulated by new surroundings. Enjoy learning something new today.  
 Tonight: Explore!

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)**  
 ★★☆☆ Financial discussions, especially about inheritances and shared property, will go well because you are favored today. Oh yes, you'll be laughing all the way to the bank. Admittedly, relations with partners and close friends might be strained. Tonight: Check your finances.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)**  
 ★★☆☆ Be prepared to go more than halfway when dealing with others today, even though your relations with everyone are friendly and upbeat! Nevertheless, you will have to compromise. Activities with kids, sports events and social outings will appeal to you. Enjoy your day! Tonight: Cooperate.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)**  
 ★★☆☆ Work-related travel is likely for many today. Regardless of what you're doing, do be aware that you will get the most done today by working with others. Teamwork is the key. People are surprisingly willing to join forces today to work for a positive cause. (You can steer this energy how you want.)  
 Tonight: Work.

**BORN TODAY**  
 Actor Jason Bateman (1969), actress Emily Watson (1967), musician David Grohl (1969)

Find more Georgia Nicols horoscopes at georgianicols.com

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# Examiner Classifieds

## PERSONAL

**CRISIS HOTLINE**  
Call and give operator first name and brief comment about service needed.  
1-800-224-0422

**Domestic and Sexual Violence 24/7 Crisis Line**  
TCN Domestic Violence Program  
877/394-1046  
TCN's Soteria Shelter  
937/404-2365  
TCN's New Directions Outreach Office  
937/593-5777

FOR INFORMATION Concerning American Red Cross Blood Services Program, call 650-5000.

**NEW PATH**  
Pregnancy Resource Centers  
www.newpathprc.com  
709 N. Main St., Bellefontaine  
937-592-7734

**POISON CONTROL CENTER**  
1-(800)222-1222  
24 Hour Hotline

## WORK WANTED

**CARMAN BUILDERS**  
Vinyl siding, replacement windows, seamless spouting, roofing. Free estimates. 585-6472 or 937-726-7714.

## HELP WANTED

**ADEA RULINGS**  
The Bellefontaine Examiner does not knowingly accept help wanted advertisements in violation of the Age Discrimination Employment Act. The ADEA prohibits arbitrary age discrimination of persons age 40 or over and applies to employers with 25 or more employees, employment agencies and labor organizations. Advertising containing such terms as "young", "boy", or "girl" or designating a certain age such as "age 35 to 55" or other similar specification indicates discrimination against employment of older persons and are considered in violation of the act. Information about the Act may be obtained by calling or writing the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division.

## SERVICES

FOR ONLY \$335, you can place a 25-word classified ad in 133 newspapers across 68 counties. All newspapers within the OhioScan network total a readership of over 2,000,000. Call Bellefontaine Examiner, 592-3060. Visit www.adohio.net.

## SALES

Are you a pet owner? Do you want to get up to 100% back on Vet Bills? Physicians Mutual Insurance Company has pet coverage that can help! Call 1-855-772-0756 to get a free quote or visit [www.insurebarkmeow.com/ohnews](http://www.insurebarkmeow.com/ohnews)

Connect to the best wireless home internet with EarthLink. Enjoy speeds from 5G and 4G LTE networks, no contracts, easy installation, and data plans up to 300 GB. Call 877-430-7752

**DENTAL INSURANCE** from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 350 plus procedures. Real dental insurance-NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-844-510-2384  
[#6258](http://www.dental50plus.com/ohnews)

**DIRECTV OVER INTERNET** - Get your favorite live TV, sports and local channels. 99% signal reliability! **CHOICE Package**, \$84.99/mo for 12 months. HBO Max and Premium Channels included for 3 mos (w/CHOICE Package or higher.) No annual contract, no hidden fees! Some restrictions apply. Call IVS 1-844-331-7034.

**MobileHelp**, America's Premier Mobile Medical Alert System. Whether You're Home or Away. For Safety and Peace of Mind. No Long Term Contracts! Free Brochure! Call Today! 1-844-248-9309

New windows from Window Nation. Special money saving offer - zero down, zero payments, zero interest for TWO years AND buy 2 windows and get 2 FREE! Offer is valid for select models. Labor not included. Other restrictions apply. Call Window Nation today! 855-761-0349

Stroke and Cardiovascular disease are leading causes of death, according to the American Heart Association. Screenings can provide peace of mind or early detection! Contact Life Line Screening to schedule your screening. Special offer - 5 screenings for just

## SALES

\$149. Call 1-888-874-1398  
Switch and save up to \$250/year on your talk, text and data. No contract and no hidden fees. Unlimited talk and text with flexible data plans. Premium nationwide coverage. 100% U.S. based customer service. For more information, call 1-855-763-1141

Up to \$15,000.00 of **GUARANTEEED** Life Insurance! No medical exam or health questions. Cash to help pay funeral and other final expenses. Call Physicians Life Insurance Company- 855-936-5324 or visit [www.Life55plus.info/ohnews](http://www.Life55plus.info/ohnews).

## FOR SALE

**PRICE REDUCED!!**  
**2014 ISUZU NPR-HD** with 16 ft. box. 229,314 miles. \$10,000 FIRM. Call or text TJ at 937-407-0205.

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Entire Purchase. Plus 10% Senior & Military Discounts. Call 1-877-270-8386

Switch to DISH and get up to a \$300 gift card! Plus get the Multisport pack included for a limited time! Hurry, call for details: 1-866-745-7391

## TRUCKS

**1940 CHEVY P/U**, disassembled, all sheet metal, glass, frame, no eng/trans, build it your way. \$5500 cash. Call 937-414-7984 leave message.

## MOTORCYCLES

**2008 HARLEY DAVIDSON SPORTSTER 1200FI**, less than 19k miles, lots of extras, nice bike. Asking \$5000 firm, cash. Call 937-414-7984 leave message.

## WATERCRAFT

**STARCRAFT 18 ft. alum. boat**, big Mercury 4 cyl. IO, new fish finder, bimini top, custom cover, needs driver's seat rebuilt, old but solid w/single axle steel frame trailer. \$3500 firm, cash. Call 937-414-7984 leave message.

## MISC.

\$1295 **POOLS POOLS** 19x31 Family Size Pool. Complete w/ deck, fence, filter, liner and more. 100% Financing. No Money Down. **LIMITED INVENTORY** 800-758-3559

Donating your vehicle? Get more! Free Towing, Tax Deductible. Plus a \$200 restaurant voucher and a 2-night/3-day hotel stay at one of 50 locations. Call Heritage for the Blind to donate your vehicle today - 1-877-916-1990

Don't let the stairs limit your mobility! Discover the ideal solution for anyone who struggles on the stairs, is concerned about a fall or wants to regain access to their entire home. Call AmeriGlide today! 1-844-861-0514.

Prepare for power outages today with a **GENERAC** home standby generator. \$0 Money Down + Low Monthly Payment Options. Request a FREE Quote. Call now before the next power outage: 1-614-721-0249

Put on your TV Ears and hear TV with unmatched clarity. TV Ears Original were originally \$129.95 - **NOW WITH THIS SPECIAL OFFER** are only \$69.95 with code MCB59! Call 1-855-537-1275

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material - steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer - up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-866-335-2531

**Safe Step. North America's #1 Walk-In Tub.** Comprehensive lifetime warranty. Top-of-the-line installation and service. Now featuring our **FREE** shower package and \$1600 Off for a limited time! Call today! Financing available. Call Safe Step 1-877-602-5348

The bathroom of your dreams in as little as 1 day. Limited Time Offer - \$1000 off or No Payments and No Interest for 18 months for customers who qualify. BCI Bath & Shower. Many options available. Quality materials & professional installation. Senior & Military Discounts Available. Call Today! 1-855-955-1352.

Trouble hearing your TV? Try TV EARS' Voice Clarifying

## MISC.

**Wireless TV Speaker.** Better than a soundbar and/or turning the TV volume way up. Special, limited time \$50 off offer. Call TV Ears. Use code MBSP50. Call 1-888-406-1450

**WESLEY FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC** Timeshare Cancellation Experts. Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 844-881-7118.

## FOR RENT

Rooms: private bathroom, one person only, very quiet, Bellefontaine. 937-351-3041.

**APTS., ROOMS, HOUSES** starting at \$400.00. Call or Text 937-407-2126, 441-2243.

**NOTICE**  
Housing advertisements published in this newspaper are subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968 which makes it illegal to advertise discrimination based on race, color, religion, nationality, sex, age (including children), handicap or familial status. This also includes limitation to number of persons desired. The Bellefontaine Examiner will not knowingly accept advertising which is in violation of the law.

The Heights Apartments is now accepting applications for  
1 Bedroom apartments 62 years of age or older OR disabled regardless of age  
Water, trash, sewage paid, grounds kept, laundry facilities on premises, appliances furnished.  
Rental assistance may be available.

Office Located at 611 Saxon Drive Bellefontaine, Ohio 937-599-2748  
TDD 1-800-750-0750 or Universal Relay 711  
Professionally managed by CMS Management of Corinth, MS  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider



## STORAGE

**ALL AMERICAN Storage.** Monthly rentals. Free locks. Behind Harbor Freight. 592-9100.

## REAL ESTATE

**PUBLISHERS NOTICE**  
All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in the newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

## FINANCIAL

**NOTICE LENDING OPPORTUNITIES**  
Borrow Smart. Contact the Ohio Division of Financial Institutions' Office of Consumer Affairs BEFORE you refinance your home or obtain a loan. BEWARE of requests for any large advance payment of fees or insurance. Call the Office of Consumer Affairs toll free at 1-866-278-0003 to learn if the mortgage broker or lender is properly licensed. (This notice is a public service of the Bellefontaine Examiner.)

## LEGALS

**NOTICE**  
The Bellefontaine Examiner does not knowingly accept Help Wanted ads from employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act if they offer less than the legal minimum wage or fail to pay at least time and one-half for overtime hours.

The Heights Apartments is now accepting applications for  
1 Bedroom apartments 62 years of age or older OR disabled regardless of age  
Water, trash, sewage paid, grounds kept, laundry facilities on premises, appliances furnished.  
Rental assistance may be

## LEGALS

available.  
Office Located at 611 Saxon Drive Bellefontaine, Ohio 937-599-2748

## LEGALS

TDD 1-800-750-0750 or Universal Relay 711  
Professionally managed by CMS Management of Corinth, MS

## LEGALS

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

## BELLEFONTAINE EXAMINER



- **BELLEFONTAINE'S BEST CAR WASH**  
\$14 ("BEST" Car Wash) ..... \$9
- **CITY SWEETS & CREAMERY**  
\$10 ..... \$7  
\$20 ..... \$13
- **CLANCY'S (SIDNEY)**  
\$6 ..... \$4
- **DONATOS PIZZA, SUBS, SALADS**  
\$10 ..... \$7
- **DONUT SHOP & BAKERY (RUSSELLS PT.)**  
\$10 ..... \$7  
\$20 ..... \$13
- **EASTON WATER**  
\$30 ..... \$18  
\*NOTE: (Limit 2-per purchase)
- **INDIAN LAKE ROLLARENA**  
\$6 (Fri & Sat 7-10:30 p.m.)..... \$4.50
- **KIRK MONT CENTER HABITAT HOUSE**  
\$100 (Good for (1) night rental) ..... \$70  
\$600 (Good for (1) week rental) ..... \$420
- **KNEAD MORE MASSAGE**  
\$85 (Good for (1) ONE HOUR MASSAGE) ..... \$52  
(Only 3 available per month)
- **LEE'S COMFORT SHOES**  
\$20 (Only 25 per month, 5 per customer) ..... \$14
- **McDONALDS (BFN. NORTH & SOUTH)**  
\$10 ..... \$8  
\$20 ..... \$15
- **OHIO FITNESS & MARTIAL ARTS**  
\$39.99 ..... \$28  
(Good for (1) Month Gym Membership)  
\$70 ..... \$49  
(Good for (1) Month Family Gym Membership)  
\$79.99 ..... \$59  
(Good for (1) Month Kids Martial Arts)  
\$165 ..... \$119  
(Good for (1) Month Family Gym & Martial Arts Membership)

**BUSINESSES INTERESTED IN JOINING THE PROGRAM CALL 937-592-3060 TO FIND OUT HOW!**

**NOTE: Certificates can't be combined with any other offer, coupon or gift certificate. No cash back value and are a non-refundable purchase.**

# TRADES

Continued from Page 1

inspired Saxton. A mother of three, Saxton's oldest, daughter Kaelynn, 16, is the artist in the family. She stepped up to help her mom get paint on canvas.

Her love of sunsets and the beach led Saxton to make both the subject of her submission. "We went on a beach vacation a couple years ago and took walks at sunset, so I based the painting on those memories," Saxton shared.

With a grin, Saxton admitted Kaelynn was "very hands on" in teaching her what to do, and added, "I'll cook; she can paint."

Still, she kept at it. One of the main things Saxton learned was the concept of color blending, an important aspect for shading the sky from light to dark. She wanted to make sure they put the colors in the right order.

Originally from Kenton, Saxton moved to Bellefontaine in 2017, a year after she purchased Six Hundred. In 2018, she opened Bella Vino Events

*"I am not artistic, but I think it's a cool program, I'm excited to be able to give back to the art league this way."*

**BRITTANY SAXTON**  
Contestant

& Wine Room behind the restaurant.

Saxton shares her home with Kaelynn as well as her two other children Braelin, 15, and Jaelin, 14, and her partner, Landon.

"I don't really have an expectation," Saxton said about the contest results. "It's a cool part of community involvement, and I'm just here for the experience."

The Not So Bad Art by Good People contest once again gathered art work by local celebrities to raise money for the Logan County Art League. Each piece will be on display at Citizens Federal Savings & Loan, 100 N. Main Street, Bellefontaine, weekdays during bank lobby hours until Friday, Jan. 31.

People can vote on



their favorite(s) by putting \$1 in the artist's box next to the particular piece.

This year's winner will be announced at the celebration event and dinner, which starts at 5 p.m. on Jan. 31 at Honey Birch Farm, 550 E. Township Road 30, West Liberty. After the dinner, each of the works of art will be auctioned off. All proceeds from the votes and the auction will go to the art league.

Anyone in the community can attend. Tickets for food and drinks, including dinner at 6 p.m., can be purchased online for \$30. Reservations are due by Friday, Jan. 24. You can find the form at [logan-countyartleague.org](http://logan-countyartleague.org) or by e-mailing [art@logan-countyartleague.org](mailto:art@logan-countyartleague.org).

# 'Den of Thieves 2' opens at No. 1 as 'Better Man' flops

NEW YORK (AP) — On a quiet weekend in movie theaters, while much of Hollywood's attention was on the wildfires that continue to rage in Los Angeles, Lionsgate's "Den of Thieves 2: Pantera" debuted atop the box office with \$15.5 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Mid-January is often a slow moviegoing period, and that was slightly exacerbated by the closures of about 10 theaters in Los Angeles, the country's top box-office market.

A sequel to the Gerard Butler 2018 heist thriller, "Den of Thieves 2" performed similarly to the original. The first installment, released by STX, opened with \$15.2 million seven years ago. O'Shea Jackson Jr. co-stars in the sequel, which debuted in 3,008 North American theaters.

Butler's films are becoming something of a regular feature in January. He also starred in "Plane," which managed \$32.1 million after launching on Jan. 13 in 2023.

"Den of Thieves 2," made for about \$40 million, was a bit more costly to make. Audiences liked it well enough, giving it a "B+" CinemaScore. Reviews (58% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) weren't particularly good. But it counted as Lionsgate's first No.1 opening since "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes" in November 2023.

Also entering wide release over the weekend

was the Robbie Williams movie "Better Man," one of the more audacious spins on the music biopic in recent years. Rather than going the more traditional routes of Elton John ("Rocketman") or Elvis Presley ("Elvis"), the British popstar is portrayed by a CGI chimpanzee in Michael Gracey's film.

The Paramount Pictures release, produced for \$110 million and acquired by Paramount for \$25 million, didn't catch on much better than Williams' previous forays into the United States. It tanked, with \$1.1 million in ticket sales from 1,291 locations. Gracey's previous feature, 2017's "The Greatest Showman" (\$459 million worldwide), fared far better in theaters. Reviews, however, have been very good for "Better Man."

It was bested by "The Last Showgirl," the Las Vegas drama starring Pamela Anderson. The Roadside Attractions release expanded to 870 theaters and collected \$1.5 million.

Also outdoing "Better Man" was Brady Corbet's "The Brutalist." Coming off winning best drama at the Golden Globes, the A24 postwar epic grossed a hefty \$1.4 million from just 68 locations. It expands wider in the coming weeks.

The weekend's lion share of business went to holiday holdovers, including "Mufasa: The Lion King," "Sonic the Hedgehog 3," "Nosferatu" and "Moana 2." In its fourth week of

release, Barry Jenkins "Mufasa" continued to do well, adding \$13.2 million to bring its total to \$539.7 million worldwide. Also on its fourth weekend, "Sonic the Hedgehog 3" padded its \$384.8 million global total with \$11 million. Robert Eggers' "Nosferatu," the surprise hit of the Christmas period, collected \$6.8 million in ticket sales, bringing the vampire tale to \$81.1 million domestically.

The Walt Disney Co.'s "Moana 2," in its seventh week of release, added \$6.5 million to bring its global tally to \$989.8 million. In the coming days, it will become the third Disney film released in 2024 to notch \$1 billion, joining "Inside Out 2" and "Deadpool and Wolverine."

Final domestic figures will be released Monday. Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Den of Thieves 2: Pantera," \$15.5 million.
2. "Mufasa: The Lion King," \$13.2 million.
3. "Sonic the Hedgehog 3," \$11 million.
4. "Nosferatu," \$6.8 million.
5. "Moana 2," \$6.5 million.
6. "A Complete Unknown," \$5 million.
7. "Wicked," \$5 million.
8. "Babygirl," \$3.1 million.
9. "Game Changer," \$1.9 million.
10. "The Last Showgirl," \$1.5 million.

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# Carrie Underwood, Village People to perform at Trump's inauguration events

BY MICHELLE L. PRICE  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP) — Country music star Carrie Underwood will perform "America the Beautiful" at Donald Trump's inauguration next week and the 1970s hitmakers Village People will perform at two inaugural events.

Underwood, who launched her career on "American Idol," is to perform shortly before Trump takes the oath of office at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 20, according to a copy of the inaugural program provided to The Associated Press on Monday.

"I love our country and am honored to have been asked to sing at the

Inauguration and to be a small part of this historic event," Underwood said in a statement Monday. "I am humbled to answer the call at a time when we must all come together in the spirit of unity and looking to the future."

American disco group the Village People made a name for themselves in the late-70s for their chant-along dance-pop hits and their colorful on-stage personas. Their best known hit, "Y.M.C.A.," is widely considered a gay anthem -- and became a staple of Trump's rallies in the last election, along with their hit "Macho Man."

The American disco group is set to perform at one of Trump's inaugural



Carrie Underwood performs during the Times Square New Year's Eve celebration on Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2024, in New York. (PHOTO BY CHARLES SYKES/INVISION/AP)

balls and a rally he's holding in Washington the day before he's sworn in.

"We know this won't make some of you happy to hear however we

believe that music is to be performed without regard to politics," the band said in a post on its Facebook page Monday. "Our song Y.M.C.A. is a global anthem that hopefully helps bring the country together after a tumultuous and divided campaign where our preferred candidate lost. Therefore, we believe it's now time to bring the country together with music which is why VILLAGE PEOPLE will be performing at various events as part of the 2025 Inauguration of Donald J. Trump."

Other inauguration ceremony performers will include two of the president-elect's musical favorites, country singer Lee Greenwood and opera singer Christopher Macchio.

The pomp and spectacle that comes with the inauguration of a new president kicks off this weekend in Washington with a fireworks show at

Trump's golf club in Sterling, Virginia, a campaign-style rally in D.C., a visit to Arlington National Cemetery and glitzy dinners before the former president takes the oath to become the next president.

Trump's second inauguration is expected to be a much different affair than the last time America got a new president. Trump, who refused to accept his 2020 loss, did not attend Democratic President Joe Biden's swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol, where there were still visible reminders of the violent Jan. 6, 2021 siege on the building by Trump's supporters.

The committee planning Trump's inaugural ceremonies released a schedule Monday of four days of events centered around the Jan. 20th swearing-in ceremony, which Biden is planning to attend.

"President Trump is dedicated to uniting the country through the strength, security, and opportunity of his America First agenda," Steve Witkoff and Kelly Loeffler, the co-chairs of the inaugural committee, said in a statement.

Witkoff is Trump's incoming Middle East envoy and Loeffler is a former Georgia senator who is Trump's pick to run the Small Business Administration.

"The 2025 inaugural celebrations will reflect President-elect Trump's

historic return to the White House and the American people's decisive vote to Make America Great Again," Witkoff and Loeffler said.

On Saturday, Trump is scheduled to attend a reception and fireworks display at his Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia. Separately, Vice President-elect JD Vance will attend a reception for the incoming Cabinet members and host a dinner.

On Sunday, the president-elect is to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery and then hold a campaign-style "MAGA Victory" rally at Capital One Arena in downtown Washington. The Village People are scheduled to perform at the rally.

The Republican's Inauguration Day plans include tea at the White House, the swearing-in ceremony at the Capitol, a congressional luncheon, a parade on Pennsylvania Avenue and a trio of balls.

The inaugural balls include a Commander in Chief Ball focused on military service members, a Liberty Inaugural Ball geared toward Trump supporters that will feature a Village People performance, and the Starlight Ball, focused on high-dollar donors. Trump is scheduled to speak at all three balls.

The presidential parade after Trump is sworn in will include about 7,500 participants including first responders, veterans groups and school marching bands. First responders from Butler County, Pennsylvania, where Trump survived an assassination attempt, will be among the groups participating.

Incoming first lady Melania Trump will join tea with the Bidens. In 2021, the Trumps did not invite the Bidens for a tea before Biden's inauguration, instead leaving town before the next president was sworn in. In November, when Joe Biden invited President-elect Trump to the White House, Melania Trump chose to skip the visit.

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